



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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State's global literacy initiative receives national recognition

Wisconsin receives one of three Practice of the Year awards from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills

MADISON—Wisconsin's global literacy initiative received a 21st Century Skills Practice of the Year award today during the Partnership for 21st Century Skills annual best practices meeting in West Virginia.

"We are honored to accept this award on behalf of the many individuals and organizations that have worked together to make global literacy a part of everyday life in Wisconsin's schools, workplaces, and communities," said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. "Helping our citizens understand other cultures and languages is critical to Wisconsin's continued economic success."

Wisconsin's global literacy initiative was one of three state programs to receive a 21st Century Skills Practice of the Year award. North Carolina's statewide education policy on 21st century skills and West Virginia's 21st century learning skills standards also received inaugural awards from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. In making awards, judges considered:

- How well the practice encompassed the Partnership's Framework for 21st Century Learning,
- How easily the practice could be replicated in other states, and
- The level of innovation.

The state superintendent and governor convened Wisconsin's Statewide International Education Council in 2002. For almost five years the council has led the state's efforts to bring international perspectives and skills to PK-16 education. Visible results include publication of Wisconsin's guide to "Planning Curriculum in International Education," the only one of its kind in the nation; the development of five Regional Leadership Alliances, each with business and education co-chairs; an International Education Summit to gather a broad range of perspectives to help shape recommendations for

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internationalizing education; and publication of statewide international education recommendations, “Global Literacy for Wisconsin,” stating five key goals:

- global literacies for all students
- world languages for all students
- global training for all teachers
- intercultural experiences for all citizens
- international linkages for Wisconsin businesses and government

The Department of Public Instruction also is connecting with educators and communities in France, Germany, Japan, and Thailand. These official collaborations have lead to many opportunities for schools to bring broad perspectives to all subject areas and to prepare students for living beyond their customary borders.

Judges said that Wisconsin’s initiative represents a comprehensive international education program and is a solid example of global awareness in practice.

“Wisconsin is a nationally recognized leader in bringing an international perspective to its educational system,” said John Box, vice chair of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and vice president of product development and support for JA Worldwide. “The state has demonstrated its continuing commitment to equipping its graduates with the international education and world languages its students need to compete in a globally competitive workforce.”

“We recognize that our citizens need to be globally literate to understand the linkage of economies, peoples, and cultures around the world,” Burmaster said. “Our International Education Council and Regional Leadership Alliances, which consists of PK-12, public and private university and technical college education leaders as well as representatives of business, labor, government, and community groups, are working on a common goal: to ensure that all citizens can function comfortably and effectively in other languages and cultures.”

North Carolina, West Virginia, and Wisconsin are leaders in the 21st century skills movement and “their work should serve as models for building a world-class education system,” said Ken Kay, president of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. “These awards applaud the collaborative leadership in each state and bring well-deserved national visibility to their exceptional teaching and learning practices.”

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills is the leading national education-business coalition focused on infusing 21st century skills into education. South Dakota and Maine recently had applications approved to join the partnership.

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NOTE: This news release is available electronically at http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/eis/pdf/dpi2007_57.pdf . More information about the Partnership for 21st Century Skills is available at <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org> .